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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet makes a case for performance evaluation of educational personnel as the primary method for improving schools. The case is developed through commentary, examples, and statements of educators familiar with performance evaluation. The paper examines current issues related to the evaluation of educational personnel such as the purpose of evaluation, the relationship between evaluation and teacher unionism, evaluation and the negotiation process, evaluation as a basis for staff development, and the ability of educators to police themselves. A separate chapter is devoted to a discussion of six school districts in the country that have model performance evaluation programs. Final chapters deal with accountability, the evaluation conference, and termination of an employee. (Author/LD)

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Performance Evaluation of Educational Personnel

M. Donald Thomas

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Performance Evaluation of Educational Personnel

By M. Donald Thomas

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The Auburn University (Alabama) Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, as sponsor of this fastback, dedicates it to chapter member Gerald S. Leischuck, international president of Phi Delta Kappa 1977-1979, in acknowledgment of his significant leadership role in Phi Delta Kappa and in response to his challenge to "make a difference."

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Introduction

We have danced on the rim of the volcano far, far too long. The time has really come for action which matters, action which is riveted to performance and results, action which compels us to do what we do best—teach well the things young people now need and will need in order to live their lives in a self-sufficient, enlightened way.

—William Goldstein
Superintendent of Schools
Rocky Hill, Connecticut

Performance evaluation of educational personnel is a complex process. It is, however, a process needed in every school district of our nation. Performance is the achievement of specific objectives that are expressed as performance standards. Evaluation is assessing the degree to which standards are achieved. There is no more effective way to improve the quality of education than through performance evaluation. Excellence in schools is more directly related to the performance of people than to anything else.

Unfortunately, a study of the history of education indicates that evaluation of schools has not centered on the performance of teachers and administrators. Rather, it has concentrated on less important items: architect[illegible]umber of books in the library, course selection lists, expenditure per pupil, curriculum guides, number of certified staff per thousand students, administrative organization, and degrees obtained by staff. Each of these items is of minor significance when compared to performance evaluation of school personnel. Not even increased expenditure for salaries or expenditure per pupil is as effective in improving schools as is a program to evaluate how well people do what they are employed to do.

Although there is only a little empirical information to show that performance evaluation is related to educational quality, that information is fairly consistent. School districts that implement strong performance evaluation programs obtain improvement in educational quality. Such districts concentrate on certain results they wish to achieve and generally achieve them. They seem to follow the advice of William Goldstein, superintendent of schools in Rocky Hill, Connecticut: "In developing programs to improve teaching, rigor and achievement need to be reemphasized . . . standards, rigor, and challenge [are needed] to return schools to their premier place of enlightenment." Scott Thomson makes this same point in his National Association of Secondary School Principals publication, *Guidelines for Improving SAT Scores:*

> Holding against this national tide were a few high schools alert to the problem. These schools took certain initiatives or else maintained some specific "standards" that they considered important to the success of their college-bound students. . . . Parents and teachers jointly expect good academic progress. . . .

The best route to obtaining good work is by expecting excellence from staff and students. Strong evaluation based on clear standards supports high performance.

This fastback makes a case for performance evaluation of educational personnel as the primary method for improving schools. The writer argues that performance evaluation is possible, that it is being done by some school districts, and that when it is done effectively, educators do their jobs better. In addition, performance evaluation makes it possible to move or counsel out of education those persons who do not provide satisfactory service. The case is developed through commentary, examples, and statements of educators familiar with performance evaluation.

This fastback also examines the current issues related to the evaluation of educational personnel such as the purpose of evaluation, the relationship between evaluation and teacher unionism, evaluation and the negotiation process, evaluation as a basis for staff development, and the ability of educators to police themselves. These issues have a powerful influence on a school district's ability to initiate and

conduct performance evaluation programs. They are difficult issues to resolve, but they can be resolved.

Tough issues have not interfered with the desire of many school districts to establish strong and effective programs for performance evaluation. The work of several school districts is presented to show that performance evaluation is possible and that it can be done with the support of employee groups. It is interesting to note that such programs concentrate on standards, on results, and on validation of achievement. The teacher or administrator knows in advance what needs to be accomplished, how it will be known if it is achieved, and how evaluation is connected to accomplishment.

The reader is warned, however, that what works in one school district may not be right for another. Success in performance evaluation is influenced by many factors: the quality of the board of education, the school district climate, union leadership, community conflict, superintendent security, and a host of other variables. Each school district should tailor its performance evaluation program to the conditions and needs of that district. Models can illustrate, but they rarely can be replicated *in toto*.

A performance evaluation program is the key to educational accountability. Schools will be accountable when individual performance is held accountable. Performance evaluation can establish accountability in a school district. Evaluation validates results and identifies weaknesses that need to be corrected. It may also provide rewards for accomplishment above the ordinary.

Evaluation and accountability must be established for the performance of all members of the educational community. The work of the board of education, the services of administrators, the effectiveness of supervisors, and the excellence of teachers must all be examined. All must be part of a performance evaluation system that establishes what is to be achieved and identifies the contribution of each person to that achievement. Accountability can be shared when each person is responsible for a part of the action.

One of the most important steps in performance evaluation is the evaluation conference. This fastback discusses both the conference process and the skills required to hold an effective conference. It also

presents information related to a conference to terminate an employee. As difficult as such conferences may be, they can produce positive results for both parties when properly conducted.

As was said before, the quality of service provided by people is more important than anything else. Performance evaluation should lead to better service or to termination from the school district. Both will improve our schools.

The final chapter in performance evaluation has not yet been written. It probably never will be. The complexities of human productivity, the variations in human motivation, the difficulties in validation of performance, and the interrelatedness of the many variables that affect performance are problems that have not yet been solved. They will require continuous research and refinement.

We are fortunate, nevertheless, to have some direction, to have several models, and to have partial vision in establishing excellence in our schools.

Let's examine what has already been done.

Review of Performance Evaluation

Evaluation in public education has always been troublesome. It has been troublesome for both teachers and administrators. Although both groups profess the value and necessity for evaluation, neither has truly believed that it can be effectively accomplished. At one extreme is the position of Robert Finley, superintendent of schools in Glen Cove, New York: "Evaluation is subjective . . . period. No other way to evaluate people exists—so that's the way to do it." At the other extreme, the National Education Association states: "Evaluation must be objective; subjective evaluations have a deleterious effect on teachers and children." If any common ground can be reached, it will take modification of both positions, cooperation, and hard work. In the meantime, both teachers and administrators must have the courage to experiment with performance evaluation systems that have already been invented. That they are not perfect is not sufficient reason to do nothing. In time, systems will be created that are satisfactory to both groups.

Early in our history, educators were evaluated on the basis of traits and attributes. For many years it was believed that quality service was somewhat related to good grooming, or good speech, or good looks, or a pleasant personality. Thus extensive lists of so-called "good traits" were developed. Educators were marked good or bad on the basis of these traits as observed by "superiors." It was generally assumed that these "superiors" possessed the "good traits" to a high degree and were, therefore, able to judge their existence in other people.

An examination of "good traits" lists shows that the following were considered to be important in performance: enthusiasm, strong

voice, flexibility, humor, personality, insight, judgment, originality, adaptability, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, integrity, conviction, cooperation, leadership, punctuality, pleasant appearance, good diction, and morality. One district included sincerity, self-control, alertness, pleasant mannerisms, and good grooming. Another district evaluated performance as being effective if educators attended professional meetings, read professional journals, accepted majority decisions, and complied with school district decisions.

Personality characteristics may or may not relate to quality of performance. No significant body of knowledge or major research studies demonstrate that effective educators must possess a particular trait or cluster of personality attributes. Effective educators probably do possess these traits to varying degrees. This is not to say, however, that positive personality traits are not helpful. It simply means that effective performance of responsibilities is not related to specific personality traits or that one will fail if he does not possess such traits. Not will all persons who have such traits succeed as educators. Success in education is more complex than merely rating an individual on a scale of 1 to 10 on such items as "solid thinking," "good listener," or "appropriate sense of humor" as is done in one Illinois school district.

Admittedly, there is some positive correlation between performance in any field of work and such items as intelligence, emotional stability, energy level, and motivation. This is common sense and needs no massive research support. Able educators tend to be better if they possess these qualities. So are able lawyers, doctors, salesmen, nurses, and bricklayers.

When people began to question evaluation systems based on traits and attributes, new programs for performance evaluation were implemented. These new programs based evaluation on skills and competencies. Especially popular were the so-called process scales developed in the group climate studies of Kurt Lewin, Gordon Lippitt, and R. K. White. It was assumed that effective educators could be evaluated by judging the extent to which particular skills were demonstrated.

Thus, performance evaluation methods were developed that concentrated on relationships between people and skills that were demonstrated by educators. The effective teacher had "good classroom cli-

mate," had "appropriate rapport with students," and demonstrated abilities to organize, to prepare adequately, to inspire, to develop self-direction in students, to present clear and definite assignments, to ask clear and concise questions, to listen effectively, to tolerate tension, and to personalize discipline.

As late as 1975 an evaluation system developed by a San Francisco suburban school district contained 27 "skills" to be evaluated by the principal. Among them were these:

1. Lesson is well organized.
2. Careful planning has been done.
3. Presentation is inspiring.
4. Assignments are clear and definite.
4. Harmony exists between teacher and student.
6. Teacher invites differences of opinion.
7. Teacher utilizes humor when appropriate.
8. Teacher is democratic and fair.

The evaluation system for administrators and supervisors included creating a "positive school climate" and demonstrating these abilities: democratic behavior, ability to work with others, ability to organize inservice education, ability to motivate others, ability to supervise, ability to keep accurate records, ability to make appropriate reports, and ability to speak to groups.

There may be some relationship between certain skills and success in performing one's responsibilities. Research does indicate that effective educators tend to have certain competencies. This has been demonstrated by the work of M. Mohan, R. E. Hull, B. Rosenshine, and N. Furst. Even they, however, are cautious to point out that effective teaching is related to a "cluster" of competencies and not to individual skills.

Again, as with traits, there are certain skills that are *prima facie* beneficial: ability to motivate, ability to stay on task, ability to speak clearly, ability to plan effectively, and ability to control and be respected, for example. These, however, represent a segment of the total good teacher, good principal, or good superintendent. Further, they are difficult to isolate and measure effectively. There is no adequate reason to believe that educators can be evaluated by marking a rating

scale that contains a long list of skills and competencies. At best it is useful in identifying able individuals, but is of questionable value in deciding the quality of performance of an educator or whether he or she should or should not be terminated.

In recent years many school districts have attempted what are called product evaluation methods. Both principals and teachers are evaluated on student achievement, test scores, number of students failed, vandalism, attendance, number of graduates who enter college, and other so-called "objective" data. In most cases the evaluation process does not give adequate consideration to the many variables that affect the "product." Nevertheless, concentration on certain competencies to be achieved is a more acceptable performance evaluation measure than is a rating of traits and skills. I only repeat the warning of Henry Chauncey, former president of Educational Testing Service: "Standardized tests of student achievement are such useful teaching tools that it is often a mistake to try to make them do double duty as measures of the teacher as well."

In some school districts and in many institutions of higher learning, performance evaluation is related to "contributions" made by the educator. Such contributions can be made to the community, to the schools, to the education profession, and to professional societies and organizations. Educators are thus evaluated on offices held, articles published, speeches given, footnotes received, honors obtained, and number of times that they have appeared on conference programs. There is no argument that these are important, but educators are employed primarily to provide service to a particular school district and not to the profession. Furthermore, it is yet to be demonstrated that good writers are good teachers, or that good speakers are good principals, or that good office-holders are good superintendents. Effective educators may, in fact, have these qualities; but they are effective in a particular school district because they perform well in that district primarily and make other contributions secondarily. Many extremely effective educators have never held office in a professional organization, have never published an article, and have never appeared on a major conference program.

This is not to argue, however, that educators should not provide

these services. If they can, that's just fine. However, making contributions is not an appropriate measure for performance evaluation unless doing so is a specific assignment of the job. Performance evaluation should relate more directly to what is to be achieved, what services are required, what responsibilities are to be carried out, and what *performance* is to be demonstrated in a specific school district.

Today performance evaluation of educational personnel is receiving attention from school districts, legislative bodies, and the educational profession in general. Recently, major conferences on performance evaluation have been held by Phi Delta Kappa, University of Illinois, McGill University, and the U.S. Office of Education. A common theme in all these conferences was that quality education is dependent on quality performance of educators. Further, current performance evaluation programs are based on *performance standards* rather than traits, skills, product analysis, awards, or contributions. It may be a more productive way to go.

Performance evaluation based on performance standards may be described as an MBO (management by objectives) system. It is, however, more than that. There is a great difference between MBO in industry and MBO in education. In education, the variables that affect performance are more difficult to control, validation of performance is more complex, and standards are more interrelated among employees than they are in industry. Education requires a great deal of sharing, extended cooperation, and in-tandem carrying out of responsibilities. Here is how the system works.

1. *Performance standards are established for each certificated employee.* Usually four to eight standards are established for each person. Standards state what is to be achieved, conditions under which achievement is possible, and the method for validating achievement. Examples:

   a. The food services director will increase the number of meals served by 25%. Supportive participation standards will be established for school principals and budget will be increased by 10%. Achievement will be measured by appropriate district reports to be submitted to the superintendent on a monthly basis.
   b. The school mean on the Iowa Tests of Educational Develop-

ment (ITED) will be four months above normative in reading and mathematics at each grade level. A budget of $200 per student will be provided for each student diagnosed as being six months below grade level prior to October 1, 1978. ITED will be administered on May 15, 1979.

c. Classroom attendance will average 96% for the school year. Absences may be reclaimed on an hour to hour basis by make-up assignments. Modification may be made if unusual conditions develop. Validation is made by monthly attendance reports to the principal. A year-end audit will be conducted.

Performance standards are established for everyone: the superintendent, teachers, supervisors, principals, and other certificated personnel. All standards relate to specific objectives to be achieved and approved by the board of education. Standards may relate to pupil achievement, to school tax elections, to legislation, to attendance, to inservice education, to curricula, or to whatever a board of education or community wishes to achieve. What is important is that standards establish the results to be achieved and that personnel are accountable for achieving them.

2. *Standards are monitored.* Everyone receives supervision in the process of achieving the established performance standards. Periodic evaluation conferences are held to assess progress toward the performance standard to be achieved. The board president meets with the superintendent. The superintendent meets with supervisors and principals. Principals and supervisors meet with teachers. The purpose is to assess progress being made toward the achievement of performance standards. During the conference it may be necessary to clarify standards, to modify them, or to establish new standards.

3. *A remediation process is established.* Those who do not make adequate progress toward the achievement of standards are placed on remediation. This requires the identification of behaviors or conditions that are preventing success. When identified, behaviors or conditions are corrected. Correction is made with the help of colleagues, with the use of additional resources, or with the development of new skills or competencies. When remediation is not possible, a decision is made to reassign the individual or to terminate him.

4. *Validation of achievement is established.* This final step is probably the most important part of a performance evaluation program based on performance standards. Evidence of achievement varies with the type of standard to be attained. Student achievement can be validated with standardized tests, with teacher-made tests, with individual student achievement records, or with judgments made by the teacher. The attainment of specific skills, such as art skills, can be validated by an examination of products made by students. Proficiency as a group (debate class, vocal music class, physical education class) can be validated by observation.

Validation of performance standards can be qualitative as well as quantitative. Some items are validated by records (attendance, vandalism, and book loss). Other items can be validated by human judgment (effective parent-teacher conferences, time on task, process skills, and cooperative behavior). Some items can be validated by products produced (legislative bills, reports, curriculum guides, record-keeping systems, and diagnostic tools). Most important is that the validation method be established when the performance standards are accepted.

Performance evaluation based on performance standards assumes that educational personnel possess the traits, skills, qualities, and characteristics needed to do a good job. If standards are not being met, the educator must remediate whatever it is that is preventing success. With the help of supervisors and colleagues, deficits are examined and corrected. If identified weaknesses cannot be corrected, the employee is counseled into another work area or terminated. Concentration is on results being achieved and not on discrete personality characteristics or individual skills. These are examined only if they prevent one from being successful in achieving established performance standards.

As with other forms of evaluation, a program based on performance standards is no panacea. It, too, has important flaws that must be carefully examined. Standards can be capriciously assigned. They can be too easy to achieve or too difficult. They may be related to unimportant functions of the school, or they may be beyond the control of the person to whom they are assigned.

Nevertheless, at a time when there is little agreement as to what

constitutes effective performance, establishing standards appears to be a more appropriate evaluation system than previously used programs. Further, performance standards do not negate desirable traits, skills, and characteristics. Rather, standards incorporate whatever is needed by the educator to make him succeed. The attainment of standards may require that certain traits be practiced, that new competencies be learned, that new attitudes be developed, that additional knowledge be gained, or that certain behaviors be mastered. Performance evaluation, however, is not based on these discreet items; but on the total ability of being able to achieve agreed-upon standards.

Current Issues in Performance Evaluation

Performance evaluation of educational personnel has been and continues to be controversial. Although it is generally supported by the various groups in the education family, there is widespread disagreement on many questions. Controversy is especially intense when evaluation enters the negotiations arena. Some of the items on which there is disagreement are:

1. What is the basic purpose of evaluation?
2. Who should be evaluated and by whom? Should evaluation be for probationary employees only or for both tenured and probationary employees?
3. Can competencies be identified, measured, and evaluated?
4. Is evaluation a negotiable item?
5. Can professionals evaluate each other?
6. Can inservice training of educational personnel replace evaluation?

Before dealing with these questions, however, it is necessary to look at the legal basis for the performance evaluation of school employees. Evaluation has become a hot legal issue because of declining enrollments, tightening budgets, accountability, falling test scores, and desire by the public to "cut the deadwood." These are developments that affect job security.

Educational personnel have some protection under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. They enjoy freedom of speech and have some latitude in the use of educational materials. Courts have ruled that teachers have freedom particularly in the choice of teaching materials, providing such materials are educational and do not adversely affect the welfare of students.

Also, the Fourteenth Amendment provides "equal protection" so that classes of personnel must be evaluated on similar criteria. Further, evaluation instruments cannot discriminate against minority, women, handicapped, or older workers. It is clear that the evaluation process should be guided by the various federal laws that prevent any form of discrimination based on national origin, race, religion, sex, age, or handicap.

At the state level, evaluation is restricted by state tenure laws, certification laws, and collective bargaining laws. State laws usually specify the bases for termination, the process for dismissal, and the due process rights that educational personnel enjoy. In general, educational personnel may be dismissed for what is commonly referred to as the five Is: injury to children, immorality, insubordination, illegality (above a misdemeanor), and incompetence. The means of determining incompetence may or may not be specified in law. Competence may be related to the achievement of specific objectives as is done by the Stull Act in California.

Court cases in the area of evaluation have protected constitutional rights, have not interfered with the rights of local school boards to evaluate, and have strictly applied the procedural requirements of evaluation laws. They have generally said that evaluation:

1. Must identify weaknesses;
2. Must provide substantial assistance to remedy the weaknesses;
3. Must include periodic reports to the individual being helped;
4. Must follow the legal processes or the processes established in the negotiated contract; and
5. Must protect the due process rights of the person.

Evaluation will continue to be an important legal question. More and more states are considering laws to require the evaluation of educational personnel. Recently such laws were enacted in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Ohio. As the laws and the courts continue to clarify this area, the issues discussed below will be easier to resolve.

Purpose of Evaluation. There is considerable controversy over the basic purpose of evaluation. At one extreme are those who claim that evaluation is to "get rid of the incompetents." At the other extreme are those who look at evaluation as a way to "help all educators to

become better." Some claim that evaluation has both purposes. Others state that evaluation should improve performance, motivate employees, provide information for administrative decisions, determine merit payments, differentiate assignments, and provide information for inservice education programs. It appears that each evaluation program has its own purposes. What is unfortunate is that those purposes are often covert or misunderstood by the various groups of employees: teachers, principals, or supervisors. Conflict arises when each group assumes a different purpose for the evaluation process.

The purposes of evaluation should be made clear. One purpose is to terminate. Another is to assist. Still another is to make administrative decisions, such as changing one's assignment. Whatever the purposes, they should be clearly stated and disseminated. It is not inappropriate to let everyone know that evaluation is being used to dismiss incompetents. Once that is clearly stated, the issue of purpose can be resolved openly and candidly. What is most troublesome is the actual use of evaluation to terminate when the stated use is to help everyone become better.

Responsibility for Evaluation: The question of who should be evaluated and by whom has been debated for many years. Similarly, controversy has existed over how often evaluations should be conducted, what the criteria should be, and what process or instruments should be used. An issue of intense debate is whether or not tenured personnel should be evaluated.

The literature indicates that evaluations can be conducted by peers, students, principals, supervisors, central office staff, parents, or a combination of these individuals. There are also models of self-evaluation. There are strong arguments for and against any of these approaches to evaluation. An examination of evaluation programs in different states shows a variety of approaches involving various school personnel.

The controversy in this area boils down to who shall make the final decision—teachers or administrators, the superintendent or the board of education, professionals or lay people. The question of who has the power to recommend dismissal seems to be more important than methods, procedures, instruments, or how often evaluations are conducted.

Responsibility for evaluation in most states ultimately rests with local boards of education. They are responsible for implementing evaluation programs. Such programs may be developed in cooperation with employees, may be negotiated into master contracts, or be implemented unilaterally by the superintendent. The decision to establish an evaluation program and to do it well is more important than when, by whom, and how it is done. Most evaluation programs will succeed if the board of education is convinced of the importance of evaluation, assigns responsibility for carrying it out, and follows through to see that it is done.

Validating Competencies. The issue of identifying, measuring, and validating competencies is particularly troublesome in education. First of all, few can agree on what competencies educational personnel should have. Second, instruments for precisely measuring competencies are not available. Finally, competencies may be verified by one individual but contradicted by another.

The Seattle public schools have developed a teacher evaluation system based on such competencies as ability to plan well, ability to control class, and ability to teach effectively. Evaluation is based on observations in the classroom by the principal. Teachers are evaluated annually, given a notice of unsatisfactory performance if the principal identifies incompetence, and provided time to improve. Those who do not improve are terminated. The program is supported by the Seattle Teachers Association as long as the district is careful about protecting the due process rights of the teacher and involves the association in helping the teacher to overcome weaknesses.

There is a good deal of literature on what competencies are, which competencies should be possessed by educational personnel, and methods for measuring competencies. Stripped of its technical language, a competency is an ability to do something. It is seen in the performance of an individual. A teacher *controls* his class. A principal *cooperates* with parents. A superintendent *balances* the budget. A supervisor *evaluates* a subordinate. Competencies indicate that an individual can perform well in a certain area of human behavior. The questions that cause debate in this area, however, are those on which there is little agreement. Are competencies controlled by the individual

or by factors beyond his control? What can a teacher do with a class of incorrigibles? What can a principal do with a group of mentally ill parents? What can a superintendent do with lack of board of education support?

Additional questions that cause controversy are these: Is the evaluator looking at competencies or personality traits? Is the evaluator biased in his observations? Can one person validate competencies or should it be done by a group? Can an individual validate his own competencies? Rather than argue indefinitely on such issues, it is better to introduce an evaluation program and refine the competencies than to postpone action because there is no general agreement on what to do and how to do it.

Evaluation and Negotiations. Some state courts have ruled that evaluation procedures cannot be established through employee negotiations. Both Nevada and Illinois courts have said that local boards cannot establish evaluation programs by collective bargaining. The courts in these two states take the position that evaluation is the responsibility of local boards and can be restricted only by statutory provisions. Other courts have taken the position that evaluation procedures are a permissive issue that can be negotiated at the local board level. The Connecticut Commissioner of Education stated that evaluation procedures can be established "by mutual agreement between the . . . board . . . and the teachers representative."

What is critical in this matter is the distinction between the authority to evaluate and the procedures used for evaluating school personnel. The authority resides in the board of education, but the procedures for evaluating may be established in cooperation with employees. Boards of education should be careful not to negotiate away authority when negotiating procedures. Here is a sample agreement in which the board retains authority:

> Each school employee shall be evaluated each year. The evaluation plan shall be developed by the superintendent of schools in consultation with the employees of the district. It is the position of the board of education that persons not suited to education shall be terminated by the school district.

Here is a sample agreement that seriously curtails the authority of the board of education:

> The purpose of evaluation is to improve employee performance and to encourage employees to evaluate their own effectiveness.
>
> Probationary personnel shall be evaluated once each year and tenured personnel shall be evaluated once every five years.
>
> Evaluation shall be based on forms attached to this agreement. No other evaluation forms may be used for the duration of this agreement.

Most negotiated agreements fall in between these two positions. If evaluation procedures are negotiable, boards should be careful in not limiting themselves in number of evaluations to be conducted, instruments to be used, and purpose for evaluation. It should be made clear that evaluations will be conducted, that it is an important responsibility, and that it can lead to dismissal. To do otherwise is to misinform the employees of the school district.

Peer Evaluation. The question of whether professional educators can or cannot evaluate each other has been with us for a long time. Peer evaluation has been described as both a blessing and a disaster. Much depends on the willingness of educators to evaluate their colleagues in an honest and frank manner. Most peer evaluation programs aim at helping colleagues improve performance. Few peer evaluation programs relate to termination procedures. Where teacher associations support strong evaluation programs, peer participation appears to work well. Where associations are not in support of strong evaluation programs, peer evaluation tends to make little contribution.

The issue of peer evaluation is further complicated by the confusion over self-assessment and performance evaluation. Some believe very strongly that professionals should and can assess their own performance. The problem, of course, is that self-assessment is entirely different from performance evaluation. One may assess what he does, or feels, or believes to satisfy himself. That is certainly appropriate. Evaluation, however, is a process of determining if one's work is satisfactory to someone else. One may be satisfied with oneself, but that level of performance may not be satisfactory to someone else.

In performance evaluation it may be possible to include one's own

assessment in the evaluation process. Effective evaluation, however, must go beyond that. The individual who is unsatisfactory usually cannot appreciate that he is unsatisfactory. What is more appropriate is the recognition of unsatisfactory behavior by a peer, a supervisor, or a videotape. The purpose of evaluation is to assess whether or not the individual is performing well as judged by others. It is not a process to provide each of us an opportunity to justify whatever we do.

Nevertheless, boards of education and employees will continue to differ on the value of peer evaluation. In those districts where evaluation uses peer assistance as only a part of the total process, it may work well. In districts where the entire process is based on peer judgment, evaluation is usually ineffective.

Inservice Education. Inservice education and evaluation serve different programs and should be kept separate. Some educators attempt to criticize evaluation procedures by claiming that they incorporate insufficient inservice education opportunities. Although school districts have a responsibility for providing renewal activities for their employees, unsatisfactory service cannot be justified simply by the lack of such activities. Further, inservice education experiences can be supportive of a strong performance evaluation program, but they cannot be a substitute for performance evaluation. It is here that differences occur. Some who promote strong inservice programs believe that they eliminate the need for evaluation. Others believe that no matter how effective inservice education is, some employees will never provide satisfactory performance.

This is not to say that inservice is not an important responsibility of school districts, but it should not be a substitute for a performance evaluation program. Both are necessary. The evaluation program is to establish the level of service, and inservice is to help all employees to keep current and to obtain new skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

As stated earlier, evaluation is supported by the various groups in the education family. Each group, however, wishes to control the process, establish the procedures, or make the final decisions. Boards of education are struggling to keep authority in their own hands. Administrators want to be free to evaluate anyone at any time for any purpose. Teachers are fighting to be included in the process, to eliminate the

evaluation of tenured teachers, and to help establish definitive evaluation criteria and specific instruments to measure them.

One thing is absolutely *clear*—performance evaluation is important. It is significant in the minds of educators, legislators, and parents. Performance evaluation is the basis for establishing confidence in the schools. It is an area that will require more and more attention. Quality education is directly related to the quality of service performed by school personnel. Regardless of the issues, the debates, the controversy, and the conflict, performance evaluation is here to stay. The more effort and resources we allocate to evaluation the better our schools will be. This is one conclusion on which there is little disagreement.

Performance Evaluation: Models

Performance evaluation is being done well by many school districts. As a result, more and more school districts have developed more sophisticated and more effective performance evaluation programs. Pressure to develop such programs has come from state legislatures, local boards of education, and associations of school employees. All three groups have demonstrated a renewed interest in strong performance evaluation programs.

The following selection of six districts as models does not mean that these are necessarily the six best districts in the nation. Rather, they have been selected to illustrate 1) that performance evaluation is possible, and 2) that it is possible with various groups of employees (teachers, superintendents, principals, supervisors, and other central office personnel). There are hundreds of other school districts that have excellent performance evaluation programs that could have been selected as models. A list of school districts from which additional information on performance evaluation can be obtained is provided in the Appendix. However, the list is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Dallas Independent School District
Dallas, Texas

This district requires that principals evaluate the performance of teachers and indicate 1) if the teacher should or should not be re-employed for the following year, and 2) if the teacher's overall performance is successful, marginal, or unsuccessful. The principal makes his decision with the aid of an instrument that evaluates the per-

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formance of teachers in 10 skill areas. The skill areas are: classroom management, pupil-teacher relationship, professional attitude and conduct, preparation and planning, knowledge of subject matter, public relations, techniques of instruction, pupil adjustment, pupil evaluation, and health and appearance. Each area is evaluated as successful, marginal, or unsuccessful.

Each of the 10 areas is subdivided into competency statements. For example, under classroom management one of the competency items listed is, "Creates a room atmosphere conducive to learning." Under techniques of instruction is listed, "Provides ample opportunities for the expression of clear, accurate, complete, and pertinent ideas." In the area of pupil evaluation is listed, "Administers standardized tests in accordance with district policy." The competency items in each area range from two statements under public relations to 10 statements under techniques of instruction.

Both the official form dealing with reemployment and the evaluation instrument are filled out in triplicate. When completed by the principal, one copy of each form is given to the teacher, one copy remains with the principal, and the third copy is sent to the personnel office. Teachers who are rated successful continue in employment, those who are marginal are given opportunities to improve performance, and those who are unsuccessful are terminated from the school district.

Consolidated High School District #230
Palos Hills, Illinois

This district has developed what it considers to be an excellent performance evaluation system for administrators in the system. The performance and effectiveness of an administrator are evaluated in these areas: 1) major areas of responsibility; 2) individual performance objectives; and 3) personal functioning.

Under the *major areas of responsibility* are included those specific duties expected of administrators by their job descriptions as well as the general functions of administration. Under *individual performance objectives* are those objectives prepared by the administrator being evaluated and mutually agreed to by the administrator and the evaluator. Usually, they are related to systemwide goals and objectives,

areas of responsibility, and personal growth. Under *personal functioning* the administrator is appraised in a systematic fashion, considering existing special circumstances under which he works.

In an initial conference, the appraiser and the administrator meet to agree upon performance objectives for the year. In interim conferences, progress in the achievement of performance objectives is reviewed along with a discussion of constraints and possible need for modification. Responsibilities and personal growth goals are reviewed. These conferences may be initiated by either the appraiser or the administrator. During the final conference, the administrator submits to the appraiser a self-appraisal of the achievement of performance objectives along with a brief summary of the major accomplishments for the year. Supportive material may be provided. At this conference, the appraiser and administrator review overall performance for the year.

The appraiser prepares a written summary, evaluating the performance and effectiveness in the three areas. Copies of the report are provided to the administrator, to the superintendent, and to the school board. The superintendent utilizes the reports to develop an evaluation designation for each administrator as either unsatisfactory, competent, or highly effective. The designations are established by school district policy and are defined as follows:

Unsatisfactory Performance

> This designation will be used when the superintendent determines, after review of the appraisal, that the overall performance has been unsatisfactory for the time period. The major job functions have not been maintained, or the individual performance objectives have not been attained, or the personal functioning has not been satisfactory. The superintendent will convey his determinations to the appraiser, whose responsibility it shall be to inform the appraisee which specific job functions have not been maintained in a satisfactory manner, which performance objectives have not been attained, and how the personal functioning has not been satisfactory. . . .
>
> The superintendent shall be given for his approval a set of performance objectives for the ensuing year. These shall be developed by the appraiser and the appraisee and shall be aimed at upgrading those areas in need of attention. During this year, an intensive appraisal will be conducted.

Competence Performance

This designation will be used when the superintendent determines, after review of the appraisal, that the overall performance has been acceptable for the time period. The major job functions have been maintained, individual performance objectives have been attained, and the personal functioning has been satisfactory.

Highly Effective Performance

This designation will be used when the superintendent determines, after review of the appraisal, that the overall performance has been highly effective for the time period.

Responsibility for Appraisal

One person will be responsible for the appraisal of an individual, but he may have the assistance of others in the process. The superintendent will be responsible for the appraisal of the deputy superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and all building principals. The building principals, in turn, will be responsible for the appraisal of their assistant principals and other administrators who are assigned to the building. The deputy superintendent (curriculum) will be responsible for the appraisal of the director of career and vocational education and for all district coordinators.

Santa Clara Unified School District
Santa Clara, California

This district has developed a sophisticated performance evaluation system for the superintendent, administrators, and teaching staff. Under the supervision of Nick Gervase, assistant superintendent for personnel services, it has implemented a "certificated employees uniform evaluation system." The program is a management by objectives approach modified for the school setting. Intensive evaluation is conducted for all certificated staff, including the superintendent of schools, Rudy Gatti.

The performance evaluation program is based on district objectives, board of education policies, administrative procedures, and classifications of certificated employees. Performance standards are established for each certificated employee each year. Employees are rated either outstanding, effective, improvement needed, or remediation required. The same classifications are used for both teachers and administrators. In addition, some central office administrators are evalu-

ated on specific responsibilities. Persons who are evaluated as needing improvement are given specific ways to improve. Those who are evaluated as needing remediation are provided remediation services. If remediation is not successful, termination follows.

Of particular interest is the process used to evaluate the superintendent. In the early fall the board of education establishes district goals to be achieved by the superintendent. Such goals are formally adopted by the board of education. Once the goals have been established, the superintendent develops specific plans for achieving them. Throughout the year, progress reports are presented to the board of education related to the goals. In December, the board of education meets with the superintendent to evaluate his performance in achieving the board of education goals. The discussion also includes areas of interest to the board or to the superintendent. Following the December meeting, the superintendent is given a "letter of evaluation." It discusses what areas are satisfactorily being achieved and what areas may need more aggressive attention. The letter may also make additional suggestions to the superintendent and/or compliment him for his work.

In the spring, the superintendent reports to the board the degree to which the objectives have been achieved and steps that are being taken if a particular goal will not be achieved. The process requires the superintendent to identify corrective action if such action is needed. A formal report on district objectives is accepted by the board at the end of the school year.

The following August or September the process begins again: goals are established; conferences are held to assess progress; validation of achievement is made; and the superintendent's performance is evaluated. The system provides frequent opportunity for the board to visit with the superintendent and to let him know its feelings about what is happening in the school district. Frequent evaluation and progress conferences build trust between the superintendent and the board of education.

The evaluation of other employees is done in much the same way as the evaluation of the superintendent. Objectives are established, progress is assessed, and conferences are held. If help is needed, assist-

ance is provided. If an employee needs remediation, such services are put into operation. Both the attainment of objectives and human qualities are evaluated. The system appears to work extremely well in the Santa Clara Unified School District.

Birmingham Public Schools
Birmingham, Michigan

This district has developed what is called "The Evaluation of Teacher Personnel for the Improvement of Instruction." The plan is reviewed annually by a committee of teachers and administrators. It includes five sections: introduction, purpose for evaluation, goals for performance, procedures for evaluation, and an evaluation instrument. The plan is compatible with the requirements of the *Michigan Teacher Tenure Act*.

What is unique about this plan is its great amount of detail. Each of the performance goals contains a statement of competency and the "sample evidence" to support competency. There are 10 performance goals to be achieved and evaluated. They are:

1. The teacher is competent in the subject area(s) and level(s) of instruction or area of service to which he is assigned.
2. The teacher focuses attention on the learner, his learning, and his growth.
3. The teacher makes effective use of instructional methods and materials.
4. The teacher demonstrates competency in management and control in the classroom or area of service.
5. The teacher maintains written evidence of adequate planning and organization.
6. The teacher evaluates students. He uses information gained to inform appropriate staff members, students, parents, and supervisors regarding pupils' progress.
7. The teacher relates positively and communicates effectively with students, parents, members of the community, and other staff members.
8. The teacher maintains acceptable qualities that serve as models for students.

9. The teacher supports students, staff, and community and observes professional ethics in his relationships with students and the community.

10. The teacher shows an interest in student activities and willingly shares and participates in the activities of the school.

Each area is given one of five ratings: acceptable, needs strengthening, not acceptable, does not apply, or not observed. In addition to the evaluation of these 10 items, a general evaluation is provided. The evaluator may write in comments. Both the evaluator and the teacher sign the instrument. Separate instruments are used for tenured and nontenured (probationary) teachers.

Salt Lake City School District
Salt Lake City, Utah

This district's performance evaluation program requires that each certified employee shall be evaluated each year. It is the policy of the school district that "persons not suited to the educational setting should not be employed by the school district." Performance evaluation is directly related to board of education objectives. Each certified employee completes a new accountability plan each year. The plan includes performance standards to be achieved and methods for validating that such standards have been attained.

To achieve board of education goals, the superintendent establishes performance standards for himself and his immediate staff and directs the interests, energies, and talents of the staff to support the board's goals.

Principals meet with supervisors for administrative services to establish building unit performance standards. Each principal supports board of education objectives, establishes additional building objectives, and accepts a personal growth objective.

Once the principal establishes unit performance standards, he meets with each teacher to establish individual performance standards. Standards support board of education goals, but each teacher may also establish additional personal goals. Principals may also suggest goals for specific teachers in areas that need improvement. Principals super-

vise the achievement of teacher performance standards and report achievement to the supervisors for administrative services.

In September, each teacher develops an accountability program in conference with the principal. This contains each teacher's contribution to the attainment of board of education objectives. Once the standards of performance are agreed to, the teacher has freedom to achieve the objectives as long as he operates within the framework of school policy, law, professional ethics, and the prescribed budget. Principals and teachers periodically discuss progress being made to achieve objectives. If help is needed, both principal and teacher may receive additional help from central office personnel. Each teacher reports to the principal in May to validate the attainment of the objectives agreed to in September. Validation may be by test scores, teacher judgment, documents, observation, performance of students, or other mutually accepted methods.

A key factor in the Salt Lake City School District plan is the work of the staff coordinator. He is the one that integrates the various accountability and evaluation functions. The staff coordinator has three major functions: 1) to work closely with the board of education; 2) to monitor the district's accountability program, and 3) to assign schools to administrators for supervising services. He accounts for all reports, deadlines, and conference schedules. In developing priorities, the coordinator gives emphasis to board of education goals. He validates that the following steps have been taken to incorporate the district goals into an accountability process:

1. Development of specific performance objectives for every certificated employee.
2. Planning and implementation of programs to carry out objectives in each unit.
3. Identification of budget support for each objective.
4. Identification of the kind of evidence needed to assess attainment of objectives.
5. Determination of the manner in which attainment of objectives will be reported.
6. Implementation of inservice training needed to achieve objectives.

7. Review of programs, goals, or objectives by the staff and by the board of education as needed.

8. Implementation of programs to properly inform the board of education, employees, patrons, and the public.

Of particular interest in the Salt Lake City School District performance evaluation program are two items: remediation programs for teachers and administrators and performance payments for administrators.

Remediation Process. Employees who are not making a satisfactory contribution to the district goals are placed on remediation. When remediation is needed, it begins with a 30-day period of informal remediation. This applies to both administrators and teachers. If remediation is not accomplished after 30 days, a formal remediation team is established. For teachers, the team consists of a learning specialist, the principal, and two teacher colleagues. For administrators, the team consists of the superintendent and two administrators who are members of the professional rights and responsibilities committee.

Teams work with the persons on remediation for a five-month period. At the end of five months a recommendation is made to terminate or to destroy all records (if remediation has been successfully achieved). During the remediation period, reports are made to the individual on remediation and to the superintendent. Due process rights of individuals on remediation are protected and massive help is provided by the team. If remediation is not satisfactorily achieved after five months, the superintendent holds a termination conference with the person to be terminated. If remediation is successful, the employee is congratulated and all records are destroyed.

Performance Payment. The Salt Lake City School District performance evaluation program provides a 2% (of salary) performance payment for all administrators (including the superintendent) if all board of education objectives have been achieved. In administering the 2% performance payment the following criteria are used:

1. Ability to understand and effectively implement board policy.

2. Ability to achieve performance standards as designated by the superintendent of schools.

3. Ability to administer the accountability program and achieve district and local objectives.

4. Ability to operate within budgetary limits.

5. Ability to operate within the limits of education law.

6. Ability to operate in accordance with principles of shared governance.

7. Ability to keep current, to continue learning, and to be aware of educational development.

The judgment to award the performance payment is made by the superintendent or by an administrator who supervises another administrator. The award is made in June of each school year. Those who do not receive the payment are provided with a plan to remediate the area of deficiency that caused them to lose the award. The plan has worked successfully for five years.

School District #1
Brown Deer, Wisconsin

This district has a comprehensive performance evaluation plan for both teachers and administrators. Based on a management by objectives approach, it was first implemented in 1974. The program is divided into 1) management by objectives and merit pay for administrators, and 2) professional staff improvement and evaluation of teachers.

Administrator Evaluation. The administrator evaluation system consists of a management contract, a management by objectives plan, an evaluation process, and a merit pay scale of 1% to 5%. Merit pay is determined after a rigorous evaluation of each individual performance. Here is how the system works.

Early in September, meetings are held with each principal to establish objectives to be achieved for the school year. Three or four major objectives are established and written into the "Administrator MBO Contract." The contract contains: the rationale, objectives to be realized, the expected results, strategies to be followed, a definition of responsibilities, resources needed, evaluation process, and evaluation dates. Each contract is an agreement between an administrator and a supervisor.

Once the objectives for each administrator are established, three or

four review conferences are held during the school year to evaluate progress and to identify ways to improve performance. These sessions provide an opportunity to check progress, to discuss problems, and to discuss concerns not related to the MBO contract. Frequent informal discussions augment the formal evaluation conferences.

Each June meetings are held to evaluate administrative performance and the achievement of objectives. Strengths and weaknesses of each administrator are discussed and performance is rated to establish merit pay. Merit pay is granted to the extent that performance has been above satisfactory.

In late June, a three-day retreat is held with administrators to review the accomplishments of the district (including individual schools) and to establish priorities for the following year. The priorities serve as a basis for establishing objectives to be written into MBO contracts for the next school year. In September the process begins again with individual meetings with each administrator.

The unusual part of the Brown Deer administrator evaluation plan is the merit pay provision of 1% to 5% of salary. Merit pay is earned by the accumulation of points obtained in the performance of job responsibilities and the achievement of district objectives. Performance can be evaluated as exemplary, well done, satisfactory, and less than satisfactory. The more points one receives, the higher the merit pay.

Teacher Evaluation. The teacher evaluation system is similar to that used for administrators. Teachers are expected to develop objectives for the school year and to establish methods for validating their achievement. Conferences are held early in the year with each teacher to establish the basis for evaluation. However, teachers' attainment of objectives is not tied to merit pay.

During the year, principals meet with teachers to assess progress toward the achievement of objectives. Such meetings are held after formal classroom observations. At the end of the school year in May, a final formal evaluation conference is held with each teacher. The items discussed in these conferences are detailed in the "Professional Staff Improvement and Evaluation System" for teachers.

Performance Evaluation and Accountability

Accountability in education begins and ends with human performance. Schools are a cluster of services performed by men and women. They are not a series of machines or a bank of computers. In schools, it is people that are accountable, not books, supplies, equipment, or buildings. Any program of accountability must, therefore, be based on performance evaluation of educational personnel.

The drive for accountability is not a localized effort. Rather, it is a national movement. Accountability is discussed in the U.S. Congress, it is a topic of discussion in almost every state legislature, and it is talked about by thousands of boards of education. It is discussed in big cities, in small towns, and in rural America. It is regarded by most as a necessary reform to improve performance of school personnel. And to make it happen, many states have enacted so-called "accountability" laws.

The press for accountability will not subside. Our public schools are under strong attack. Citizens throughout the nation are questioning whether or not schools are doing an adequate job of educating students for responsible living. It seems that a large segment of our nation is struggling to make our schools accountable. The message is clear—better human performance is expected.

While most will agree that schools should be accountable, there is a tendency for various groups to point to other groups for accountability. Teachers say that principals should be accountable. Boards of education say that superintendents should be accountable. Principals say that teachers should be accountable. In fact, all members of the

education community must be accountable and be evaluated and judged on their performance. The need is for all to improve performance and to stop blaming others. Those who cannot provide adequate services should be terminated.

Here is a possible program for attaching accountability to performance evaluation for all members of the school community. It is only one example of many methods that could be established. It begins with the board of education and the superintendent of schools.

Accountability areas are clearly defined and understood and made public. The superintendent "contracts" with the board to "deliver" certain levels of achievement, to develop a proper learning environment, and to perform other duties. These agreements are made public and become the basis for evaluating the superintendent. At the same time the board does not become embroiled in the superintendent's "style," personal habits, management approach, or the use of personnel.

The result is that accountability gives the superintendent much more freedom, much more latitude in program improvement. If he is to deliver on the agreements, the board can hold him accountable only if it does not restrict him in methods and programs. Budget, laws, policy, and ethics become the only restrictions. Beyond that he must rely on creativity, courage, and prayers.

Validation of the results can be achieved in a variety of ways: testing, observation, performance, professional judgment, individual profile records, and self-assessment by students. When given the freedom to be accountable, most superintendents would accept any of these validation strategies.

Once the superintendent has accepted accountability agreements, he, in turn, develops accountability agreements with his management staff, and these agreements are also made public. Again, the board of education must not become involved in the individual styles of building principals. Within the constraints of law, policy, ethics, and budget the principal must have the freedom to produce the agreed-upon results. Any principal worth his pay should be jubilant to work under these conditions.

Next, each unit principal negotiates accountability agreements with each teacher, and these agreements are given to the clients (students) and their parents. These are individualized agreements with each teacher to produce certain results in pupil achievement, in learning environment, in pupil control, and in other duties. Teachers must be given latitude in style and must be held accountable for results within the constraints of law, policy, ethics, and budget. Little concern need be given to length of skirt, weight, style of hair, and personal traits. Accountability deals with agreements, achievements, and results, not with style in achieving those agreements. What counts is the ability to produce. Agreements may be made in any other area to help achieve board of education objectives negotiated with the superintendent.

The validation at this level is similar to validation for districtwide achievement: testing, observation, profile records, professional judgment, performance, or self-assessment by the learner. Each method is valid when properly conducted. In the final analysis, only human judgment can validate learning. Other data can help, *but human judgment must interpret, confirm, and validate these data. All evaluation data must be made public.*

An accountability system can work if authority is properly delegated. What this means is that school boards can hold the system accountable if the system is "free" to succeed. Boards cannot expect accountability to work if they take it upon themselves to screen and employ custodians or to criticize the superintendent for his introduction of an individualized reading program. Nor can boards expect accountability to work if they prescribe learning materials, reduce resources, and cut back on support services. Accountability and freedom are husband and wife. *Without both there is no marriage.*

Accountability begins and ends with people. Schools can be accountable if they utilize performance evaluation methods. Success depends on the board of education being willing to trust and to free up the system. It also depends on secure and open administrators and on teachers who are willing to be evaluated on performance. It is not an easy task, but it is one that will result in the restoration of public confidence in the schools.

The Evaluation Conference

Performance evaluation requires three distinct types of conferences: one to establish performance standards, one to assess progress being made in achieving standards, and one to validate that standards have been achieved. This is the minimum number of conferences required. They are formal conferences established to evaluate the performance of individuals. In addition, informal conferences may be conducted to supplement the formal evaluation conferences. The number of conferences held will depend on the person being evaluated and on the progress being made in attaining performance standards.

Initial Conference

Early in the school year, conferences are held to establish performance standards. The purpose of this initial conference is to make it clear that each employee is expected to uphold certain performance standards. The conference is also an opportunity to clarify the conditions under which the standards are to be achieved, the help that is available for achieving them, and the methods that will be used in establishing if the standards have been reached.

At the outset, a basic purpose should be clearly stated at the conference. For example:

> Marc, we are meeting today to establish your performance standards for the 1979-1980 school year. These standards are related to the objectives of the board of education and to your areas of responsibility. I assume that you have already written standards for yourself and I have done the same. This conference is to look at what each of us has done and to develop performance standards for which you will be responsible this year. Your evaluation will be conducted against those performance standards.

The person conducting the conference should possess certain skills. Some of these skills are listed here.

1. The ability to conduct the conference in a friendly manner.

2. The ability to maintain an exchange of opinions and information so that neither party dominates the conversation.

3. The ability to discuss expected performance and not past performance.

4. The ability to clarify language, expectations, help to be provided, and methods of validation.

5. The ability to summarize areas of agreement.

6. The ability to establish a relationship that permits the teacher to assess abilities, skills, problems, and processes related to the achievement of performance standards.

7. The ability to maintain a cooperative atmosphere rather than an argumentative one.

8. The ability to establish performance standards.

Conducting any conference requires that one listen attentively, speak frankly, and counsel effectively. These are skills that must be learned if the conference is to be productive and if performance standards are to be communicated meaningfully.

Occasionally, during an initial conference two problems can occur:

1. The employee does not really communicate how he sees his job, his performance, or what his plans are, or

2. The employee is defensive and justifies or denies past performance instead of focusing on future performance.

If this happens, the counselor should first check his own behavior. It is possible that he has fallen into one or more of the common pitfalls in counseling:

1. Talking too much.

2. Acting like a judge.

3. Reacting to the employee's personality instead of his performance.

4. Solving problems that the employee can, and should, solve.

It is never too late to restore the climate of mutual trust and confidence necessary for a successful conference. A very candid admission that "We don't seem to be getting very far," and a request that the employee

help determine what is going wrong in the meeting will often clear the air and help establish or reestablish a productive relationship.

It is important that the initial conference establish clearly and forcefully that performance will be measured against the broad objectives as determined by the board of education of each school district. Helping each employee to see how his performance relates to the school district objectives is an important part of this initial conference. Here is what the supervisor can say:

> Marc, the board of education has adopted five specific objectives for the 1979-1980 school year. Each of us is responsible for helping to achieve these objectives. You and I will be evaluated on the standards established for us to guarantee that the objectives of the board will be achieved by the end of the school year. Let's discuss your standards for each of the five objectives to see that they are appropriate and that you understand them.

The conference then proceeds to clarify and establish the performance standards for the employee. Here are some illustrative standards:

1. For the 1979-1980 school year, the ADA (average daily attendance) of my school will be 95.2%. For periods of heavy absenteeism or unusual circumstances, absences may be reclaimed through the district's established procedure. Validation will be by audit of the internal auditors and attendance reports submitted to the State Board of Education.

2. By May 21, 1979, the mean reading level of my class will be 6.3. I will identify students reading six months below grade level and prepare plans for remedial services to be provided during the summer. Instruments for the identification of talented and gifted will be completed for students reading 1.6 years above grade level. Validation will be by the Stanford Achievement Test, grade 5.

3. During the 1979-80 school year, a breakfast program will be established. During the year 250,000 meals will be served at a cost of 25 cents per meal. The entire program will be supported by federal funds. Validation will be by the yearly reports submitted by school principals.

After establishing board of education-related performance standards, the supervisor may also wish to establish performance standards that are specifically related to an employee's work habits,

relationship to other employees, attitudes and skills to be developed, or products to be produced. Here are some illustrations:

1. During the 1979-80 school year, I will have lesson plans available when requested by the principal. The plans will comply with district standards. Validation will be by examination of the principal against district standards as established in the publication *Model Lesson Plans.*

2. During the 1979-80 school year, I will acquire skill to work effectively with my school community council. Validation will be by a letter to the superintendent from the president of the community council.

3. During the 1979-80 school year, I will assist students after school from 3:30-4:00 each day. Validation will be by 95% of students indicating teacher's availability during indicated time.

Once the standards have been established they should be clarified, written, and placed into the employee's performance file. The conference should end in a friendly manner with positive comments concerning the employee's ability to succeed. The expectation is that the standards will be achieved.

Assessment Conference

Periodically during the school year, assessment conferences are held. The purpose of these conferences is to determine the degree of progress being made toward the attainment of performance standards. The conference participants attempt to determine the probability of success by the end of the school year. The person being evaluated is given an opportunity to discuss the achievements already made, plans for total success, and any help that may be needed to insure success. Depending on the progress that has already been made, additional conferences may be scheduled. If adequate progress is made, fewer conferences will be needed than if progress is unsatisfactory.

This conference should also determine if remediation is needed. If progress is unsatisfactory and it appears likely that the desired results will not be achieved, remediation is implemented. Therefore, the assessment conference should evaluate the progress being made, the

probability of standards being achieved, and the need for remediation to be started.

To determine the extent to which one is aware of performance standards, it is necessary to ask for descriptions of that performance. Ask the employee to describe what has been achieved, what items validate the achievement described, and what steps are being taken to guarantee success. This is a conference in which the person who is evaluating asks many, many questions:

1. Can you tell me your monthly attendance levels?
2. How are the students achieving in reading and mathematics?
3. Can you describe for me what units have been prepared in the teaching of ethics?
4. Have the number of meals served increased by 10%?
5. Will you achieve your standards by June 1, 1980? How do you know that the standards will be achieved?
6. Do you need any help to achieve your standards?
7. Is there any standard that has been difficult for you?
8. Is there anyone in your school who is not contributing fully to the achievements of your standards?

When there is a discrepancy between the standard and what is described, it is time to talk about the discrepancy. It is essential that the employee know that there is a difference between *doing something* and *thinking that something is being done.* What is needed during the assessment conference is tangible evidence of activity to achieve the standards and evidence that sufficient progress has been made.

If an individual is failing, this is the time to help him. Help can be provided in sufficient time to remedy the obstacles that are interfering with success. Failure can usually be traced to these causes:

1. The individual does not have the skills to perform at the level of the established standards. Identify such skills.
2. The individual does not know what the standards mean in terms of what is expected. State what is to be done in specific terms.
3. The individual does not understand how to validate performance. Review validation methods to be used.
4. The individual talks well, believes he is doing well, but cannot

concentrate on what has been achieved. Insist on tangible accomplishments. Ask for detailed information on what has been done.

5. The individual may fail because of factors beyond his control. Provide help in controlling those factors.

6. The individual may fail because he does not wish to do what is expected. Place the individual on remediation.

Generally people fail at achieving performance standards because no one tells them *why* they are failing. Whatever the cause—lack of skills, lack of motivation, lack of knowledge, misunderstanding, or inability to assess one's performance—the first step to success is understanding the cause for failure. Once the cause is known the employee can overcome the cause by clearer understanding of the standard, by gaining new skills or knowledge, by greater motivation, or by remediating negative habits. What is important is that the conference identify the problems frankly and establish firmly what corrective action is to be taken.

As difficult as it may seem, one of the kindest things to do is to identify weaknesses or lack of progress and to develop a plan to remediate the weakness or establish a better method for improving progress. Adults need not play verbal games with each other when evaluating performance. It is either adequate or not adequate. If it is not adequate, nothing makes it adequate until it is identified as not being adequate.

If the conference reveals that adequate progress has been made, the employee should be commended. The evaluator should also express confidence that the standards will be achieved by the end of the school year. It is also important that the conference not be cut short. Each employee appreciates the opportunity of sharing success with the supervisor. It is an opportunity that should be fully shared and appreciated by both.

Validation Conference

A conference at the end of the school year should establish if the performance standards have or have not been achieved. If the previous conferences have been conducted effectively, this final conference is a satisfying one for both the evaluator and the person being evaluated. Success has been achieved and both parties are satisfied.

The purpose of this conference is to validate the achievement of standards established at the beginning of the year and to examine the materials prepared to validate that achievement. There is usually an opportunity to congratulate the employee for his fine work and to make positive comments about his report.

Few of us ever receive many commendations from our employer. The validation conference provides that opportunity and should be used for that purpose. It is a way of saying "thank you" for appropriate achievement. It brings closure to the year's expectations and motivates the employee to continue performing at a high level.

Occasionally the employee may not have achieved all of his objectives. If this occurs, the conference turns into an assessment of why the standards were not achieved. A plan for corrective action must be developed and implemented. If one is not successful, he must know why and must have a plan to achieve successfully the next school year. Regardless of the level of performance, the final conference is one that should center on the person being evaluated. It is a time for the employee to be on center stage and to receive the applause of the supervisor and the school district or a time to develop a plan to insure success the next time.

If evaluation is based on factors other than established performance standards, the evaluation conference should still be guided by some pre-determined conditions. The evaluation conference is not an informal chit-chat. It is, rather, an important assessment of an individual's performance. It is, under any system, an attempt to establish how an individual has performed against some clearly established criteria.

More than anything else the performance evaluation conference assists the employee in knowing if he has performed satisfactorily. Acceptable performance is established by validating that certain results have been achieved, that assigned responsibilities have been carried out, that designated behaviors have been committed, or that desired conditions have been attained. Further, if success has been established, the employee is usually motivated to continue performing well. As the old cliché states so well: "Nothing succeeds as well as success." In education, the performance evaluation conference is an effective way of telling employees that they have succeeded and that they are valued by the school district.

The Termination Conference

The impression among the general public is that educators cannot be terminated. The public believes that most of those who work for public schools have "tenure" and are, therefore, employed for life. This idea is perpetuated by teachers and administrators. Teachers claim that incompetent administrators are placed in "make-work" central office jobs. Administrators claim that terminating a teacher is so difficult, they don't want to touch it with a 10-foot pole.

The truth of the matter is that educational personnel can be and are terminated. The bases for losing one's job are usually related to what are commonly called the five Is: illegality, immorality, injury to children, insubordination, and incompetence. Educators may also lose their positions by not being granted tenure following a probationary period of employment. Termination follows the probationary period if teachers do not meet the standards of particular school districts.

Educational personnel can be terminated if they commit an illegal act above a misdemeanor. The school district must be able to show that the commission of the act interferes with the individual's ability to perform his duties. Similarly, engaging in immoral conduct can be the basis for dismissal when such conduct is common knowledge. Teachers and administrators can also be terminated if they administer unreasonable punishment to a child that results in permanent injury, if they will not carry out duties assigned to them, or if they cannot effectively carry out the responsibilities the position requires. Many districts terminate following a two- to five-year probationary period. The reason usually given for such termination is that while the person may be

a satisfactory employee, he does not possess sufficiently high competencies to be given tenure in the district.

One must be extremely careful in writing a letter to an individual who is not given tenure. The letter cannot state that the person being terminated is a good teacher but is not good enough for the district. The courts may rule that if he is a good teacher he should be given tenure. The letter should simply state that the person does not meet the standards of the district and that he has not achieved the level of competency required by the district. One should avoid the "you are great but not great enough for us" attitude. Courts review acts committed, not the intentions in the minds of people.

Not being given tenure terminates one's employment in the same way that it is terminated for cause. The benefits of not being given tenure as opposed to being dismissed for cause are these:

1. The official records of the school district only show that tenure was not granted and not that one was dismissed.

2. Letters of recommendation are usually easier to obtain from school officials.

3. The individual's self-esteem is protected to some extent. He may be a satisfactory employee, but is not "good enough" for a particular district.

When terminating for cause or not granting tenure, it is important that the superintendent not be apologetic. When the conference begins, the discussion should be concise and centered on the reason for termination. Further, the superintendent should establish very early the limits of the conference:

> Robert, as superintendent of the Salt Lake City School District, I have the responsibility of recommending or not recommending you for tenure in this school district. During this conference I want to explain to you as clearly as possible why I am not recommending you for tenure, what your rights are, and what we can do to help you find other work.

If the employee asks, "Does this mean that by not being given tenure I will not be employed by the district next year?" the simple answer is, "Yes, it does."

It is always easier for both parties if the purpose of the meeting is established quickly. If small talk is to occur, it is best that it occur after

the serious business has been conducted. Both parties know that the meeting is to discuss termination and not the state of the weather. The person to be terminated wil! appreciate having his situation given serious and direct attention.

Once the initial statement is given, the superintendent may ask if the individual understands the purpose for the conference, if he wishes to ask any questions, or if he wishes to say anything. At this point the superintendent should provide information, respond to questions, and clarify positions. He should not be diverted from the central issues: to terminate, to explain rights, and to indicate his willingness to help.

Depending on the issues in the case the superintendent should then proceed to establish reasons for tenure not being recommended:

> Robert, I am not recommending that you be given tenure for the following reasons: Over the past two years your evaluations have been lower than the standard required by the district. We have discussed the standards and your evaluations with you on four occasions.
>
> You have had difficulty meeting your performance standards both years. The first year you did not achieve two of your standards and this year you did not achieve the patent conference standard.
>
> The quality of your work, in general, does not satisfy the high standards demanded by the Salt Lake City School District.

If the individual is being terminated for incompetence the following statement may be appropriate:

> William, I am terminating you from the Salt Lake City School District because of incompetence. We have protected your due process rights, have followed the remediation process established in the written agreement, and have determined that you cannot effectively carry out your teaching duties.

Again, at this point, the individual may wish to have additional information, may wish to present "his side" of the case, or may wish to argue the justice of the decision to terminate. The superintendent should listen carefully, should clarify the district's position, and establish firmly that the decision to terminate has been arrived at in a fair manner and is final. Any indication that the decision will be reconsidered will be extremely damaging and create unrealistic expectations.

The proper way to handle a request for reconsideration is to explain the appeal procedure:

> Robert, my decision not to recommend tenure is subject to appeal. You may request that my decision be reviewed by the board of education at its next meeting.

If termination is for cause, the appeal procedure is more formal:

> William, my decision to terminate is subject to appeal. Within 30 days you may request in writing that my decision to terminate you be reviewed by the board of education. You may also request that a formal hearing be held by the board of education. A letter requesting a review or a hearing must be given to me within 30 days, no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 30, 1979. If you request a hearing, you must indicate whether you wish the hearing to be in an open board of education meeting or in an executive session, a closed meeting. At that hearing you may be represented by an attorney, question the superintendent, present witnesses, cross examine our witnesses, and do whatever you believe would help your position.

The superintendent should now take time to explain, answer questions, reemphasize the right of appeal, and present information needed to expedite an appeal request, if one is desired. Further, the superintendent should indicate that the appeal can go beyond the board of education:

> William, should the board of education support my decision to terminate, you may appeal its decision directly to the courts. You may obtain information about this process from the executive secretary of your teachers association or from an attorney of your choice.

Should the individual indicate a desire to take legal action, the superintendent should refrain from making any recommendations. He should make it clear that the employee has this right, that he can choose any attorney he wishes, and that the decision is one the employee must make.

Once the basis for termination has been established and the appeal process has been explained, the superintendent is ready to discuss the remaining rights that the individual has between the conference date and the date of termination. In cases where tenure is not granted, termination occurs at the end of the school year.

Again, depending on the basis for termination, the conditions will differ. Questions to be clarified are these:

1. Does the individual continue in his position until the termination date?
2. Is the individual paid until the termination date?
3. Can the individual consult an attorney to write his letter of appeal?
4. Can the individual talk to board of education members before he decides what to do?
5. Does the individual maintain his rights to sick leave, personal leave, and insurance until his termination date?
6. May he discuss his termination with his colleagues?
7. Can he expect to receive fair letters of recommendation?
8. Will there be a notice of dismissal or of not being granted tenure in his personnel file?

Being terminated from the school district in no way diminishes the civil rights of individuals, nor does it reduce the benefits to which they are entitled. The answers to the above questions are, usually, yes. The only caution is that whatever the employee does, it cannot be disruptive of the teaching/learning process. Therefore, discussing one's dismissal in a mathematics class would appear inappropriate and could lead to further action being taken by the district. If the return of the individual to his position is not appropriate, the person should be terminated, given no assignment, and be asked to limit his contacts with the district to seeing the director of personnel. For example, this could be the case if a principal is dismissed for a violent, immoral, or illegal act.

Now that the rights of the individual have been explained and clarified, the superintendent should offer help. This can be done with a series of questions:

1. Are your credentials in order at any placement agency?
2. Are you familiar with employment security?
3. Have you worked in any other area?
4. Do you do any part-time work for anyone?
5. What are your plans for obtaining another job?
6. Do you have any friends in other work areas?

7. Does anyone else in your family work?
8. What other interests or skills do you have?
9. Can we help you in any way to find another job?
10. Are there any retraining programs that may be of interest to you?
11. What are your retirement plans?

This is the time for informal discussion, for support, for interest in the welfare of the individual. If the serious business has been conducted well, the individual will want to continue the discussion to adjust to the situation. He will need sympathetic interest, information, and support. Being terminated does not mean the end of friendships. It simply means that one cannot continue in one's present job. There is no reason for the superintendent not to help the person to understand what is happening, to find another position, and to continue a friendship. This is probably the most important part of the conference. It is an opportunity to assist the individual in implementing a positive and effective plan to find a new position.

In concluding the termination conference, the superintendent should review what has happened. He should make it crystal clear that:

1. The individual has been terminated as of a certain date.
2. The individual has certain rights to which he is entitled
3. The individual has been placed on restrictions, if that is the case.
4. The individual can expect some help from the school district in obtaining another job.

He should then answer any final questions, thank the individual for his cooperation, and write up a summary of the conference for the record.

The interview with persons who are terminated should create an atmosphere that permits the individual to leave with some dignity. The evaluator may offer suggestions for improving one's work, for starting to find another job, or for adjusting to the situation. Comments should be optimistic, but should not promise things that cannot be given. A major danger is the desire to be overly sympathetic and helpful. One need only be clear, fair, and sensitive.

Conducting a termination conference is a demanding responsibility. Although one does not look forward to it with great anticipa-

tion, it need not be an unpleasant experience. The possibility of satisfaction can be enhanced if one prepares well for the conference, sticks to the purpose of the conference, and does all that he can to assist the person who is to be terminated. One must always remember that the causes for termination were created by the person being terminated and not the one who is taking responsibility for terminating.

The Future of Performance Evaluation

Performance evaluation is not yet an exact science. It may never be. Nevertheless, it is the most critical area in improving our schools. Researchers and scholars in this area have an immense challenge. Here are some of the items that still need to be understood:

1. What are the factors that motivate people to work effectively?
2. How can new skills be taught effectively in short-term training sessions?
3. What are appropriate ways to validate human performance?
4. What are the conditions that relate most directly to job satisfaction?
5. What are the most effective supervision strategies?
6. Does performance evaluation of educational personnel differ from evaluation in other fields of work?
7. What are the most effective training programs for educational personnel?
8. What needs to be done to establish performance evaluation as a positive process?

Regardless of the weaknesses that presently exist, performance evaluation of educational personnel will continue in the schools of our nation. Most forms of evaluation are better than no evaluation. It appears to the writer, however, that evaluation based on performance standards is probably better than most. It still requires additional refinement, experimentation, and development.

If performance evaluation is to continue to improve, school districts must support it with increased budget allocations. In public educa-

tion, evaluation is like the weather: Most educators talk about it, but few do any serious work with it. Boards of education should be particularly aggressive in this area and budget sufficient funds to conduct comprehensive performance evaluation programs.

In the future it may be possible to develop more sophisticated methods for performance evaluation. We look to colleges, universities, and research agencies to help us do this. Evaluation has been and will continue to be a complex area of human activity. It is not, however, beyond solution.

Finally, if we are to strengthen public confidence in the schools, performance evaluation must become a high priority. It is the one item that is most frequently discussed by students and parents. There is no other responsibility that schools have that is more important than to employ highly capable teachers and administrators and to evaluate them so that services do not deteriorate. Quality education can only be established through strong performance evaluation programs. We have tried to improve schools in many other ways. It is time that we now attempt to improve them in the most effective way—performance evaluation of educational personnel.

Appendix
Selected Districts That Have Established Performance Evaluation

Mesa Public Schools
Mesa, AZ 85201

Alhambra City High School District
15 West Alhambra Road
Alhambra, CA 91802

Escondido City Elementary School District
Escondido City, CA 92025

La Canada Unified School District
La Canada, CA 91011

Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Watsonville, CA 95076

Santa Clara Unified School District
1889 Lawrence Road, P.O. Box 397
Santa Clara, CA 95052

South Pasadena Unified School District
South Pasadena, CA 91031

Tamalpais Union H. S. District
Larkspur, CA 94939

Lebanon School District
P.O. Box 88
Lebanon, CT 06249

Newington School District
131 Cedar Street
Newington, CT 06111

Consolidated H. S. District #230
111th and Roberts Road
Palos Hills, IL 60465

Ridgewood H. S. District #234
7500 West Montrose Avenue
Norridge, IL 60634

Highland Public Schools
9145 Kennedy Avenue
Highland, IN 46322

Metropolitan School District of Washington Twp.
1605 East 86th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Colby Public Schools
480 West Fourth Street
Colby, KS 67701

Birmingham Public Schools
Birmingham, MI 48012

Bloomfield Hills Schools
4175 Pudovet Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013

Grosse Point Public Schools
389 St. Clair
Grosse Point, MI 48230

Kalamazoo City Schools
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Minneapolis Public Schools
807 Northeast Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Berkeley Heights Public Schools
345 Plainfield Avenue
Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922

Hanover Park Regional H. S. District
75 Mount Pleasant Avenue
East Hanover, NJ 07936

Princeton Regional Schools
Box 711
Princeton, NJ 08540

Hyde Park Public Schools
Hyde Park, NY 12538

Maryvale Public Schools
1050 Maryvale Drive
Checktowago, NY 14225

Cincinnati Public Schools
230 East Ninth Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Cumberland Valley School District
R.D. #1
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Tredyffrin/Easttown School District
First and Bridge Avenue
Berwyn, PA 19312

Dallas Independent School District
3700 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204

Northeast Independent School District
10214 Sommers Drive
San Antonio, TX 78286

Salt Lake City School District
440 East First South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Charlottesville Public Schools
1562 Dairy Road
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Lake Washington School District
Box 619
Kirkland, WA 98033

Seattle Public Schools
815 Fourth Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98107

School District of Brown Deer
8200 North 60th Street
Brown Deer, WI 53223

Madison Public Schools
Madison, WI 53703

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